I. **Overview**
Current information from the Center for Disease Control (CDC) indicates that COVID-19 is a virus that spreads mainly from person-to-person, typically through droplets in the air coming from an infected person breathing, talking, coughing, or sneezing in the area. The droplets can then land on surfaces or be breathed in by people who are nearby.

Germs—including COVID-19—can spread to people or surfaces when you:
- Touch your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands
- Prepare or eat food and drinks with unwashed hands
- Touch contaminated surfaces or objects
- Blow your nose, cough, or sneeze into your hand(s) and then touch frequently used items or surfaces.

Cambridge Academic Content Dictionary defines personal hygiene as “the degree to which people keep themselves or their environment clean, especially to prevent disease” (2014). Strict personal hygiene practices—including thorough and timely handwashing as well as sneezing and coughing into one’s elbow—are incredibly important actions each person can do to slow the spread of the coronavirus. This standard operating procedure (SOP) will guide the UW Oshkosh community on best practices to reduce the risk of exposure by maintaining meticulous personal hygiene. Any aspect of this SOP may be adapted over time according to current guidelines established by local, state, and or federal authorities.

II. **Applicability:**
This procedure applies to all faculty, staff, students, as well as any visitors while they are on a UW Oshkosh property (leased or owned) or attending a University-sponsored event. It should be in practice at all alert levels.
III. Procedure for all Alert Levels
Covering Coughs and Sneezes:

Note: A dry cough is a symptom of COVID-19. If you are experiencing one or more of these symptoms (see COVID-19 Symptoms in the Definitions section below), isolate yourself and consult your primary physician.

Best hygienic practice (with or without a face covering):
- Cover your mouth and nose with a facial tissue when you cough or sneeze
- Immediately place used tissues in a garbage bin
- Wash your hands as soon as possible; use hand sanitizer if soap and water are not handy
- If you’re not able to use a facial tissue, cough or sneeze into the inside of your elbow, not your hands

Although covering a cough or sneeze is considered polite, it is also extremely important to slowing the spread of COVID-19 and other illnesses. Physical distancing guidelines recommend maintaining a space of at least 6 feet between people who do not live together. However, a cough or sneeze can propel germs to distances 20-30 feet away. The large droplets of moisture from the cough or sneeze stay in the air for up to 10 minutes and then settle on surfaces, which studies suggest may remain contaminated for days. Smaller droplets of moisture from the cough or sneeze are lighter and therefore may travel much farther, linger for hours, and accumulate over time.

Wearing a face covering, such as a cloth mask, will help catch some of the droplets from being released in the air; however, many germs still escape through and/or around face coverings. It is still incredibly important to use a facial tissue or cover your nose and mouth with the inside of your elbow if wearing a face covering. If your face covering becomes damp, it should be discarded or placed in a bag by itself to be washed before next use, and a clean face covering should be used.

Clean Hands:
Keeping your hands as clean as possible through frequent and thorough hand washing can help keep you healthy and prevent others from getting sick. CDC guidance states that your hands should be washed at minimum in the following situations to prevent spread of COVID-19:
- Before, during, and after preparing food
- Before and after touching your eyes, nose, or mouth (including a face covering)
- Before eating food
- Before and after caring for someone at home who is sick
- After you have touched an item or surface in a public place that may be frequently touched by other people, such as door handles, tables, gas pumps, shopping carts, card scanners/readers, etc.
- After blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing
- After touching garbage
Additionally, to help prevent the spread of other bacteria and viruses, you should also wash your hands:

- Before and after treating a cut or wound
- After using the toilet, changing a diaper, or cleaning up a child who has used the toilet
- After touching an animal, animal feed, or animal waste
- After handling pet food or pet treats

In most cases, washing your hands with soap and water is the best way to get rid of germs. When washing with soap and water, follow these steps completely:

1. Wet your hands with clean, running water (warm or cold), turn off the tap, and apply soap.
2. Lather your hands by rubbing them together with the soap. Lather the backs of your hands, between your fingers, and under your nails.
3. Scrub your hands for at least 20 seconds. Need a timer? Hum the “Happy Birthday” song from beginning to end twice.
4. Rinse your hands well under clean, running water.
5. Dry your hands completely using a clean towel or hand dryer.

These specific steps from the CDC were based on data from a number of scientific studies and developed to prevent people from getting sick and spreading germs to others.

Hand towels are preferred over hand dryers because the used towel can be used to open a door handle/knob to exit the room, reducing a direct contact. Hand dryers have been shown to blow germs around the room if the person has not thoroughly washed their hands.

If soap and running water aren’t available, hand sanitizer with a minimum of 60% alcohol content may be used. However, it doesn’t get rid of all germs and may not be effective if the hands are visibly dirty or greasy. It may be used as a last line of defense by using the following steps as given by the CDC:

1. Apply the hand sanitizer to the palm of one hand (see label for guidance on how much is needed).
2. Rub your hands together.
3. Rub the gel over all the surfaces of your hands and fingers until your hands are completely dry. This should take around 20 seconds.

It is important that we each take responsibility in following these hygienic procedures in order to reduce the risk of exposure and spread of COVID-19.

IV. Guidance Documents/Policy Links:
V. Definitions

COVID-19: Coronavirus Disease 2019, or COVID-19, is an illness caused by a virus that is now found throughout the world. This virus typically spreads from person-to-person from close contact with an infected individual that is breathing, talking, coughing, or sneezing.
COVID-19 Symptoms: COVID-19 symptoms may be any of the following (though other symptoms may be possible):

- Fever or chills
- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Fatigue
- Muscle or body aches
- Headache
- New loss of taste or smell
- Sore throat
- Congestion or runny nose
- Nausea or vomiting
- Diarrhea

Exposure: The state of being in contact with something that may be hazardous to health, such as COVID-19.

Face Covering: Any material that covers the nose and mouth to keep the wearer from spreading respiratory droplets during coughing, sneezing, talking, breathing heavily, shouting or singing.

VI. Revision History:
Created: July 14, 2020
Revised: